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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2596

February 5, 1993

CHILD NUTRITION CONFERENCE -- USDA is hosting a conference on "Promoting Healthy Eating Habits for Children." The event will be held March 7-10 in Baltimore, MD. Sponsored by USDA's Nutrition Education and Training Program, the national conference will feature strategies for teaching children proper nutrition practices. **Contact: Phil Shanholtzer (703) 305-2286.**

SCHOOL LUNCH STUDY -- 90,000 schools across the nation serve lunches to 25 million children every school day in The National School Lunch Program. USDA's Food and Nutrition Service is conducting a dietary assessment of school meals. To be released this spring, the results can help child nutrition programs offer meals consistent with the Dietary Guidelines. The Guidelines recommend a diet that has a variety of foods, is low in fat and cholesterol, has several vegetables and products of fruit and grain, and is low in sugars and sodium. **Contact: Wini Scheffler (703) 305-2294**

WATER QUALITY RESEARCH -- Cotton production, compared with other crops, is less likely to cause erosion-induced water-quality problems because cotton acreage is not the major source of erosion in most regions. A recent study by USDA's Economic Research Service, "Cotton Production and Water Quality," highlights the importance of targeting pollution-prevention programs to attain the most cost-effective environmental protection strategies. The study shows that restricting the use of chemicals on all cotton acreage could reduce overall potential for water-quality impairment, but could raise cotton prices by as much as 31 percent. Specific chemical use restrictions, targeted to acreage considered at greatest water-quality risk, could achieve nearly the same level of environmental protection. **Contact: Marc Ribaud (202) 219-0444.**

LESS GIN -- There were a total of 1,500 active cotton gins operating in the primary cotton-producing States during 1991/92, down 33 from the previous season. The largest decline occurred in Texas, where 22 fewer gins operated. Gin numbers increased in both North Carolina and South Carolina. Sharply larger cotton crops the past few seasons have helped moderate the long-term decline in gin numbers. **Contact: Edward Glade (202) 219-0840.**

RECORD SOYBEAN YIELDS -- Fifteen states set yield records with the 1992/93 soybean crop. A record average U.S. soybean yield of 37.6 bushels per acre was reached, a 10 percent increase over the previous high yield. A cool summer delayed crop development, but when an early frost failed to materialize the result was a 2.197 billion-bushel soybean crop, the second largest on record. Soybean crush is projected at a record 1.2 billion bushels. Exports should total 745 million bushels. Prices at \$5.30 to \$5.50 per bushel will be somewhat lower than last season's \$5.60 per bushel. **Contact: Roger Hoskin (202) 219-0840.**

PEANUT PRODUCTION -- The 4.2 billion pound 1992/93 peanut crop is the third largest on record. Domestic food use of peanuts is projected to expand to 2.2 billion pounds, the second consecutive year of growth. Exports, forecast at 975 million pounds, are down slightly from last year. Prices are expected to average 28 to 32 cents per pound, compared to 28.2 cents average in 1991/92. **Contact: Ian McCormick (202) 219-0840.**

DAIRY OUTPUT & PRICES -- Milk production this year is expected to remain near the 1992 level of 152 billion pounds. Dairy markets are expected to be tight, with prices staying above support levels. Any slack in domestic markets is expected to be taken up by the Dairy Export Incentive Program. Average farm milk prices are projected to decline 3 to 5 percent from 1992's level of \$13.11 per hundred weight. **Contact: Sara Short (202) 219-0770.**

A delegation of Russian journalists recently visited USDA Radio & TV to learn how agricultural market news is disseminated in the U.S. through broadcasting. Igor B. Abakumov, left, is editor-in-chief of the "Farmer's News Weekly," published in Moscow, and is a farm broadcaster on Radio Moscow. Vic Powell, center, USDA chief, reviewed for the group USDA radio & TV broadcast operations. The interpreter, right.



TOBACCO EXPORTS & IMPORTS HIGHER -- U.S. exports of unmanufactured tobacco from January through November 1992 totaled 234,983 tons, valued at \$1.5 billion. This is an increase of 17 percent in quantity and 18 percent in value over the same period in 1991. The top two markets were Japan and Germany. U.S. unmanufactured tobacco imports during January to November last year totaled 370,785 tons, valued at \$1.27 billion. Imports were up 72 percent in volume and 80 percent in value compared to the same period in 1991. The import surge is due to the U.S. granting duty-free access for oriental tobacco from certain countries. **Contact: Kenneth Howland (202) 720-9524.**

COMPOSTING STARTS AND ENDS ON THE FARM -- Early results show that composting offers a safe and acceptable alternative to landfill disposal used by many municipalities. Studies performed by the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station find that the compost of municipal wastes is a stable form of organic matter that improves water holding, filtration capacity and fertility of soil. Agriculture could create a realistic market for the economical use of large quantities of this compost as a soil amendment. Edward Dunigan, head of the department of agronomy at the Ag Center, oversees four scientists working on the farm-based disposal of municipal waste. "Food and fiber are produced in the country," Dunigan says, "while the products of the farm are consumed mostly in towns. By returning composted wastes to the land where they originate, we can reduce potential pollution problems and enhance productivity of our farmland at the same time." **Contact: Dr. Edward Dunigan (504) 388-2110.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA # 1861 -- Maria Bynum explores the booming world of farm exports and what they mean for farmers and the economy. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME # 1343 -- My groundhog, right or wrong!; new agriculture secretary concerned with many non-farm programs; teenage obesity; new age supermarkets; questions about food irradiation? (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1853 -- USDA News Highlights; Sec. Espy's views on GATT and NAFTA; a farmer environmental poll; 1993 rice acreage reduction program; poultry producers on the alert. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1606 -- Disease resistant elms; gender-selected calves; insect resistant corn; predicting weight gain; exercise and overeating. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Wednesday, Feb. 10, U.S. crop production, world ag supply and demand; Thursday, Feb. 11, world ag/grain situation, world cotton situation, world oilseed situation; Friday, Feb. 12, ag resources (inputs); **Monday, Feb. 15 (Holiday)**; Tuesday, Feb. 16 crop/weather update, milk production; Wednesday, Feb. 17, Ag income/finance outlook, farm labor. These are the **USDA** reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

FEATURES -- Lynn Wyvill reports on food safety tips for consumers handling ground beef, and Pat O'Leary reports on USDA's meat inspection review.

ACTUALITIES -- Dr. Jill Hollingsworth, USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service, on E. Coli bacteria in ground beef; USDA chief meteorologist Norton Strommen on Western drought relief, weather and crop progress; USDA economist Jim Miller on dairy production outlook; USDA economist Scott Sanford on soybean production and markets.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- DeBoria Janifer reports on community food banks; Pat O'Leary on reclaiming abandoned strip mines; Lynn Wyvill on food safety tips for slow cookers.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Agriculture Update with anchors Eric Parsons and Lori Spiczka. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

THE DANGER...at this time of year is that if I lose my planning calendar I've lost everything, says **Gary Wergin** (KFEQ, St. Joseph, MO). The station is involved in a corn growers meeting with city officials seeking the use of ethanol in city automobiles, and with the economic development committee to have an ethanol production facility located in St. Joseph. Gary covered the Midland Empire farm trade show in late January, and is planning two weeks of special programming leading up to National FFA Week, Feb. 20-27. He'll be interviewing chapter leaders in his area.

FARM TOY SHOW...in Roseville, IL, Jan. 24, was covered by **Thomas Peterson** (WRAM/WMOI, Monmouth, IL). Tom says the antique tractors, equipment and collectibles were an incredible sight. He says a 1939 Packard pedal car was priced at \$9,000. Tom is also producing programs about the city's recycling center that is providing animal bedding from old newspapers.

MOVED...**Don Baker** from KFRM, Great Bend, KS to KSNC-TV, Great Bend.

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COVERAGE...of the National Cattlemen's Association meeting in Phoenix, AZ, was provided to listeners in the Lubbock, TX area by **Jim Stewart** (KFYO, Lubbock). Jim fed material from the convention to **Johnny May** who was producing farm broadcast programming during Jim's trip.

THE FEEDLOT BELT...is turning into the mudlot belt, says **Steve Bugbee** (KXXX/KQLS, Colby, KS). Snow and mud have increased costs to producers. Steve covered the National Western Stock Show, in Denver, CO, Jan. 12-24, where he reported that both sales and attendance were higher, and he visited **Dave Mehlhaff** (National Cattlemen's Association, Englewood, CO).

CONGRATULATIONS...to **Dean Thurow** (KCJB/KXMC-TV, Minot, ND). He received an award at the planning meeting of the North Dakota Winter Show recognizing his contributions to the success of the event. The show will be held in Valley City, ND, March 4-14. Dean says producer attendance has been high at Extension and SCS meetings.

VIC POWELL 
Chief, Radio & TV Division